

ADVOCATE AND BAPTIST.

PORTLAND, MARCH 11, 1840.

MR. MILLER.

There are few of our readers, probably, who have not heard of the somewhat remarkable man, whose name stands at the head of this article. The nature and tendency of his theory, together with the fact, that he is about to visit this State, in order to promulgate his doctrines, seem to make it incumbent on us to give him a passing notice.

We have good authority for believing that Mr. Miller's character as a man is unblemished. His published lectures breathe anything but a spirit of arrogance or bigotry. He evidently designs to do good, and however much individuals may be disposed to commiserate his errors, they will find it difficult to doubt his sincerity.

But Mr. Miller, and his theory, are two distinct subjects. The best of men sometimes err—are sometimes betrayed into absurd hypotheses, which time, the great revealer of secrets, shows to be as unreal as the "baseless fabric of a vision." We do not, however, mean to denounce Mr. Miller's theory as absurd, nor do we mean to make it a subject of ridicule. Whether the end of the world is to occur in 1843, or a thousand years hence, it is an event which can never be trifled with, by any sober-minded man.

But we are getting before our story. Many under whose observation this article will fall, may be unacquainted with Miller's peculiar tenets. Well then, he professes to have discovered from the prophecy of Daniel, and several passages in the Apocalypse, that this world is to come to an end sometime in 1843. The righteous, he thinks, will then be raised from their graves, "the wicked be destroyed from the earth by fire; and the world be cleansed from the curse of sin by the same means, and prepared for the reception of the New-Jerusalem state, or the glorious reign of Christ, with his people." This personal reign of Christ upon earth is to continue a thousand years, at the expiration of which time, the wicked dead are to be raised up "out of the surface of the earth," and judged according to their works, and finally assigned, soul and body, to a place of endless punishment.

From this brief outline of the theory in question, the reader will at once perceive that it is liable to be caught up by the lovers of novelty, and clothed with a thousand extravagancies which its author would scorn to adopt as a part of his system. The fact that it is exciting a good deal of attention, and (if report speaks true) enlisting not a few advocates from a certain class of the community, is sufficient to show that it will affect the interests of religion either beneficially or injuriously. It forms no part of our present design to attempt to show, with any degree of explicitness, which of these results will be revealed by time; though this is a point on which—with our present knowledge of the subject—we can have but very little doubt.

It may not be improper to allude to one or two points in Mr. Miller's argument, before closing this article. The materials, by which he is enabled to determine the precise year that is to fill up the measure of the present order of things, are furnished to his hand by the prophetic weeks and days mentioned in the book of Daniel. He says that in this prophecy, "days are invariably to be reckoned years; for God hath so ordered the prophets to reckon days." Without stopping to question the truth of this assertion, which constitutes a principal pillar in his system, let us follow out one of his numerical calculations.

He makes the seventy weeks, (Dan. 9: 24—26) at the end of which the Messiah was to be cut off, commence at the decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra to go and build again Jerusalem. Now in seventy weeks, there are 490 days. Admitting then his mode of interpretation to be the correct one, it was to be just 490 years from the going forth of this decree, to the crucifixion of our Saviour. This, Mr. Miller attempts to show, was the fact. And how does he do it? Why he says that 457 years intervened between the date of this decree and the birth of Christ; and 33 years between the latter event and the crucifixion, which occurred as he affirms, in the twenty-second year of the reign of Tiberias Cæsar. All this appears, at first sight, very plausible; for 33 added to 457 makes 490 precisely. He is so great a stickler for mathematical exactness in this matter as to flatter himself, that he has satisfactorily proved, that it was just 490 years, to a day, from the time that Ezra started to go up to Jerusalem, to that in which our Saviour was elevated upon the cross. But how does he prove that the latter event transpired in the twenty-second year of Tiberias? Why he says, and with good authority, (Luke 3: 1.) that John the Baptist entered upon his public ministry "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Cæsar;" and then what does he do, but divide the remaining seven years equally between John and our Saviour, assigning three and a half years to each, and making the ministry of the one cease at the point where that of the other begins! This seems to us to place Mr. Miller between the two horns of a dilemma upon one or the other of which he must swing. Either he has had access to sources of ecclesiastical knowledge of which others are ignorant, or his passion for mathe-

matical exactness has led him to make a bare assertion answer all the purposes of a well-ascertained truth.

His theory, however, is soon to pass an ordeal, which cannot fail to prove either its truth or its falsity. For he affirms, (lecture 8, page 124) that "whoever lives to see 1839, will see the final dissolution of the Turkish empire, for then the sixth trumpet will have finished its sounding, which, if I am correct, will be the final overthrow of the Ottoman power." And yet the year 1839 has passed away, and this prediction remains unfulfilled. In lecture 7, page 109, we are furnished with a similar test. He there affirms that 1839 is to be the time "when the angel, standing on the sea and land, shall lift his hand to heaven, and swear by Him that liveth forever and ever that time shall be no longer; that is, God will wait no longer for repentance, no longer to be gracious, but his Spirit will take its flight from the world, and the grace of God will cease to restrain men. He that is filthy will be filthy still. Mankind will, for a short season, give loose to all the corrupt passions of the human heart. No laws, human or divine, will be regarded; all authority will be trampled under foot; anarchy will be the order of governments, and confusion fill the world with horror and despair. Murder, treason, and crime, will be common law, and division and disunion, the only bond of fellowship. Christians will be persecuted unto death, and dens and caves of the earth will be their retreat. All things which are not eternal will be shaken to pieces, that that which cannot be shaken may remain. And this, if I am right in my calculations, will begin on, or before A. D. 1839." In a note appended to the last edition of his book, Mr. Miller informs us that the lectures from which the above extracts are taken, were written several years since, and that the authorities, which he then consulted, betrayed him into a mistake of one year, and that all the foregoing predictions will be fulfilled A. D. 1840.

After such an explicit declaration from a man whose doctrines are producing a strong sensation in some sections of the country, it is natural to cast about for the indications of a change so disastrous. The year 1840, is already somewhat advanced, and yet, so far as we can learn, there are no signs which forebode the immediate gathering of the storm so graphically depicted by Mr. Miller. Revivals were probably never more frequent, nor the world more universally at peace, than at the present time. The voice of war seems to be hushed—there is no mustering to battle, and only occasional instances of religious persecution. If then this awful event is to occur during the present year, it must burst upon the world with the suddenness of an electric flash, and wake up its terrified inhabitants from a repose, which has been unbroken by any great commotion, for a lapse of years.

But we have extended this article to an unexpected, perhaps an unjustifiable length. We have done so, because we deem it important that all who shall have occasion to examine Mr. Miller's theory, may guard against the influence of mere impressions, and look at the subject in the light of the bible, and of the reason which God has given them. If the doctrine be true, we see not how it can furnish any higher motives to faith and repentance, and submission to God, than are furnished by the Bible as it is usually interpreted. It is indeed adapted to terrify the credulous; but terror never produced a holy emotion in the human heart. If on the other hand it is false, it cannot fail, we fear, to do great injury wherever it is believed. When 1843 shall have passed away without revealing the awful event predicted by Mr. Miller, what will those say, who already scoff at religion? Nay, what will be the effect on those who owe their interest in, the subject of religion, instrumentally at least to the influence of this doctrine?

We do not say that the end of the world will not occur in 1843;—it were idle to assert, or to attempt to prove this. We have no doubt that it will come to thousands before that time; for it comes to all at death. But we feel authorized to believe, that "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father only."

BAPTISTS IN VERMONT.

(From a Correspondent in that State.)

BRO. RICKER—Supposing that a short account of the condition of the Baptist denomination in this State, may be interesting to some of your readers, I transmit the following sketch. Knowing it to be the delight of Christians to hear of the outpouring of the Spirit, and the emancipation of the slaves of the prince of darkness, I very much regret to say that a spirit of declension generally pervades our churches. The number of our churches is probably not far from 140, and of communicants 11,000. (In 1836, there were 135 churches and 10,582 communicants.) In most cases, our ministers and churches are, as we believe, established in the truth, in the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel; but there are arising among us, a few perfectionists and sanctified ones. They have not yet become numerous, nor do I think they will at present. I do not know of any church which has embraced such principles, though a very few individuals may, perhaps, be found in many of our churches.—Another cause of disagreement is union. It arose, I believe, among those who have long

taught us that a part of the ordinances of God were non-essential; some of whom, now, overlooking the thing signified, viz. union itself, direct our attention to the communion with as much earnestness, as though it were not the sign of union, but the union itself. To this course I think they are encouraged by the Union Herald, which, like a peevish child, knows not what it wants—finds fault with everything, and is pleased with nothing but the gratification of its own will. This heresy, which admits all persons who think themselves baptized, to the Lord's supper, and by some is carried so far as to dispense with water baptism, is not extensively received by our ministers and churches. I do not, indeed, know of any one among our ministers, except bro. Ranney of Woodstock, who has embraced this sentiment. There may be others, but if so, they are unknown to me.

We have a paper which has quite an extensive circulation. It still deserves the reputation it long since earned as a repository for controversies—is conducted with more ability than good taste and judgment—in the opinion of some is too exclusively devoted to abolition, and contains not only too many long controversial discussions, but too many long articles, quite too long for the generality of readers.

Our churches are, many of them, small and weak, and unable to support a pastor, consequently they enjoy preaching but a part of the time. But of those which are able to pay a reasonable compensation, only a very few are left without some one to go in and out before them, and break to them the bread of life.

Of the ministry, it may be said, that it possesses much native talent and a good degree of information—that it has been very useful in converting sinners and comforting the saints. It is by some felt to be very needful that, as the people advance in knowledge, the teachers of the people should also advance. Hence, some effort has been made to assist young men, who give evidence of being called of God to the gospel ministry. While some are deeply sensible of the importance of a well informed ministry, it is greatly to be lamented that many are too well satisfied with ignorance, to give much or do much for the promotion of knowledge. Very little has, therefore, been done in comparison with what it would seem God requires at our hand.

Missions and Sabbath Schools receive the approbation of Christians, and the support of their prayers and contributions. Yet, though in part awake to the wants of the distant heathen and of the rising generation in our own land, we are scarcely enough aroused from slumber to be conscious how sound our sleep has been, or how much we are still under its influence. May He who formed the ear, teach us to hear—He who formed the eye, teach us to see, and make us know our duty, and give us a willing heart to do it in all things. A.

Temperance Measures in Portland.

The subjoined report was read by Rev. T. O. Lincoln, at the meeting of the friends of Temperance, held in the house of the second Parish, on the 25th ult. It should have appeared one week earlier; but owing to a misunderstanding among those to whom the duty was intrusted, it was not received at the office until our last edition had gone to the press. It abounds with facts which can scarcely fail to awaken a deep, though melancholy interest in the mind of the reader. It goes to show what experience and observation have always shown, that intemperance is the most insidious of vices, and that an adequate notion of the misery it produces, can never be formed, until one has traversed the lanes and byways of some of our cities, and read the awful tale in the filthy hovels and wo-begone countenances of its imbruted victims.

REPORT

Of a Committee, appointed by the Portland Temperance Society, to obtain the statistics of Intemperance in the City of Portland.

At the last annual meeting of the Portland Temperance Society, a Committee of one from each ward, consisting of Rev. J. Whitman, and T. O. Lincoln, Messrs. Neal Dow, Woodbury Storer, W. C. Thomas, W. W. Woodbury, and Harris C. Barnes, was appointed to institute an investigation into the statistics of Intemperance in the city. That Committee having devoted much time and attention to the subject, would present the following result, arranged under several convenient heads.

1. Number of places where intoxicating liquor is sold to be drunk.					
In	Taverns.	Groceries.	Conf's.	Oyster sh'ps.	
Ward 1.	0	11	0	0	
" 2.	0	6	0	0	
" 3.	4	24	0	0	
" 4.	3	34	2	3	
" 5.	5	13	5	0	
" 6.	4	6	1	0	
" 7.	1	5	0	0	
Total,	17	90	8	3	

Thus it will be seen that there are 127 different places in the city, where intoxicating liquor is thus sold, of which 68 only are licensed to sell it. Upon the supposition, that there are 15,000 inhabitants, this will give one such place for less than every 115. Does the public good require this number?

2. Amount of intoxicating liquor brought into the city and distilled here.

Upon the first point the Committee could learn nothing definitely, but from an estimate based upon facts which do not nearly cover the whole ground, they can safely say that 20,000 gallons are sold, annually, to be drunk here.

About 1000 hogheads of molasses are annually distilled into rum, a large portion of which, in all probability, is used here.

3. Number of intemperate individuals in the city.

It is very difficult to gain accurate information on this point. The Committee, however, have obtained almost positive knowledge of at

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